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A PERIODICAL OF REFORMED COMMENT AND OPINION

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NICHOLAS WOLTERSTORFF

Reformed Scholarship and Infallibility
HARRY R. BOER

Reflections on Theology from a Canoe
M. EUGENE OSTERHAVEN

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The Reformed Journal

A PERIODICAL OF REFORMED COMMENT & OPINION

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In This Issue

Last month the *Journal* carried a piece entitled "Focus on the 60's." That piece briefly outlined some of the areas of challenge that confront the Reformed, and more broadly the Christian, community. It called the members of that community to greater stewardship of talent and to creative involvement in the life of our times. In this issue the same call is given, in the column next door under the caption "Words for the Times," and it is sounded more specifically – in the area of education – in the piece entitled "The Weight of History" by Nicholas Wolterstorff.

Dr. Wolterstorff sets forth two basic approaches to education, and argues for the one which is *not* generally made in the Reformed community. His criticisms of the way Christian education is now being conducted are fundamental and telling, and the alternative approach he argues for appears most promising.

Editor Harry Boer gives a highly interesting, perhaps even eye-opening, report on this particular question: What do Reformed theologians who enjoy a reputation for orthodoxy in biblical scholarship say about the problem of the infallibility of Scripture? The report may serve to thrust the problem into the orbit of theological science and integrity.

Dr. M. Eugene Osterhaven pleasantly reminds us that it is every man's joy and duty to reflect upon God and his relation to men. He has found that a trip into nature with a canoe is a good way and a good time for such reflection.

Reverend Richard DeRidder, recently returned from Ceylon, describes some of the most significant developments in Buddhist theology, and points out a way that Christian scholars can assist Christian missionaries.

Dr. John Calvin Reid gives an imaginative account of what Matthew might say if he could personally tell us twentieth-century Christians why he wrote his Gospel. Dr. Reid has followed both the Scriptures and the findings of New Testament scholarship in writing this instructive account.

As We See It

WORDS FOR THE TIMES

FROM THE PAST

The Bohemian Waldenses were descendants of the movement begun by John Huss. By mid-sixteenth century some of the Waldenses sought to promote closer union with the reformed churches of Poland. This was opposed within Waldensian ranks by those who argued that the Polish reformed churches were themselves in open difference on matters of doctrine. So the Waldenses appeal to Calvin for advice. With an eye to the greater danger presented by the exiled heretical Genevan refugee, George Blandrata, and the heretic Francis Stancarus, both now active in Poland, Calvin pens his reply, timely then and timely now:

Geneva, 1st July, 1560

"To the Waldenses of Bohemia,

After the brother from whom I received your letter had, in a private interview, exposed to me your instructions, as I perceived that he had sent not to me individually, but also to my colleagues, I exhorted him to repeat the same before our society. My answer will, therefore, express the common opinion of all. And, in the first place, we return you no common thanks, because you have not hesitated to send to us brethren who should be witnesses, and, as it were, vouchers of your affection towards us, and of your brotherly connection, and therefore we have the more willingly welcomed this act of courtesy on your part, because it flowed from a sincere zeal for piety. We desire, in our turn, that you should be equally persuaded how much our inclinations prompt us to cherish a holy unity. And assuredly, when we are separated from each other by such extensive tracts of country, and surrounded on every side by enemies that occupy the whole world, to enjoy this consolation of our dispersion is dear and delightful. Let us then bear witness, with common consent, that we have one Father in heaven, and that we form one body under Christ our Head. This we are confidently assured you will do, and we will make it our business to make you feel that this is in reality what we have most at heart. Now, we are convinced that there is no better bond for cementing and strengthening concord than not to lend too credulous an ear to evil reports that people circulate about one another . . . . Do you yourselves in your wisdom maturely reflect, even if we said nothing, on the vast importance of your holding out a hand to the Poles, in order that the pure doctrine of the gospel may make progress among them. For no one can doubt that your dissension, if it be remarked by the enemy, will throw obstacles in the way of undertakings already so well and happily begun. The brother has assigned to us some reasons more specious than real, why you should dread to contract a more intimate union with them; namely, that you perceive them to be rent by perverse factions. Now this motive should act the other way, and stimulate you to form a closer connection, in order to counteract the evils which are springing up and spreading so fast. For the authority of many churches lending one another mutual aid would curb those wild spirits, that, in a state of dispersion, claim to themselves a license to breed tumults and disturb all order. At present, the pious brethren, deprived of your cooperation, have a much harder task to perform. If Satan directs the attacks of Stancari, George Blandrata, and

others against Poland, is it not your duty to come to the rescue? If you neglect it, reflect whether the aid of your brethren may not one day fail yourselves . . . .

Farewell, most excellent and respected brethren. We pray our heavenly Father to govern you continually by his Spirit, to shield you with his protection, to enrich you with his gifts, and to bless all your holy labors.

—John Calvin, in name of all. (Bonnet, IV, 118ff.)

FROM THE PRESENT

When Mr. Eugene Holman, retiring past-President and Chairman of the Board of Standard Oil of New Jersey, paused to reflect upon the widening horizons which each new dawn reveals, he offered his business colleagues some advice applicable no doubt to business not only:

"Sometimes we are inclined to profess one philosophy and act according to another. We praise the idea of competition but, deep down, want it only for the other fellow. We preach free enterprise but go to the governments when a problem seems a little bigger than usual. And so one of the real dangers in our present situation is that we may seek the short-term solution. We may seek to cut imports rather than to strive to keep our exports competitive . . . . We cannot have the benefits of free competition without the stresses and strains that go with it.

"One thing is sure: we cannot go back to some fondly remembered kind of world. Important break-throughs in technology are making obsolete many of our social and political arrangements. Jet propulsion, electronic computation and communication, advances in nuclear physics and medical science are creating a world that is not only full of powerful new influences but also delicately balanced. Weary slogans and old patterns of thought will not be too useful in the nineteen sixties. Precisely what businessmen will need in the years ahead is perhaps difficult to determine, but at last three qualities seem to me essential:

"First, businessmen must possess a spirit of adventure.

"In the midst of the emerging forces of this era, the odds are rising fast against the timid. Perhaps it is still possible to live in a dream, but the hard fact is that mankind is changing in some basic ways . . . .

"This suggests a second requisite: the spirit of adventure will be fruitful only as it is related to the needs of the hour and the world.

"The time we could attend to our local affairs without reference to international events is long past. Such upheavals as the revolution in technology, the explosion of populations and the awakening of the peoples of Asia and Africa will continue their course. They will gather pace and power. The question is, are we capable of adapting ourselves to them? Here is the real test between communism and the free nations. Which will be more responsive to the inexorable demands of the world as it is and as it will be?

"Thirdly, I believe that businessmen of the coming era must have a real sense of values.

"Neither business nor politics nor any other activity is an end in itself. Their end is man and his physical and spiritual development.

"Some people have expressed concern that the individua is likely to be lost in the large corporations. Big organi zations have not grown up by chance. With their virtue and their faults, they have been developed to accomplis big tasks, and there is no need to apologize for them. Ye it is important that, by way of balance, we consciously see to protect and stimulate all the varied capacities of th human personality. We must foster not only the individua opportunity that comes from economic advancement but als the kind of atmosphere in which individual diversity ca flourish at every level.

"In the days ahead we will need a plentiful supply o fresh ideas. They will emerge only in a society that ha the courage to tolerate the greatest independence o thought and action. There are those both in our own lan and abroad who misrepresent the American way of lif They attempt to fix it in a static image. They fail, howeve to appreciate that America is a melting pot not only o peoples but also of ideas. In less than two hundred year thirteen colonies have become a world power. This amazin transformation was accomplished not by resting on dogma [i.e., prejudices] but by keeping an open mind to ne ideas and new modes of action. We may use tradition words to describe our institutions, but we have been sma enough to adapt these institutions in practice to changin realities. That is the test of vigor — the capacity to grov to develop, to evolve." (*The Lamp*, Summer, 1960

Four tests of how well we will measure up to th three qualities required by the retiring company Presider were proposed by an incoming national President; said M Kennedy to the Massachusetts Legislature:

"First, were we truly men of courage — with the courag to stand up to one's enemies — and the courag to stand up, when necessary, to one's own associates the courage to resist public pressure as well as privat greed?

"Secondly, were we truly men of judgment — with pe ceptive judgment of the future as well as the past — o our own mistakes as well as the mistakes of others — wit enough wisdom to know what we did not know, an enough candor to admit it?

"Third, were we truly men of integrity — men wh never ran out on either the principles they believed o the people who believed in them — men whom neith financial gain nor political ambition could ever divert fro the fulfillment of our sacred trust?

"Finally, were we truly men of dedication — with a honor mortgaged to no single individual or group, an compromised by no private obligation or aim, but devote solely to the serving the public good and the nation interest?"

EPILOGUE

However different in many ways are the writers of the words, they share a common passion, that is a passion f creative involvement in history as it is for the purpose striving to make history what it more nearly ought to b That we may, with them, share this passion, they spea a "various language . . . ." —L.D.K.

The Weight of History

by Nicholas Wolterstorff

WE WOULD ALL AGREE THAT CHRISTIAN EDUCATION should consist in making our faith articulate. But how is this to be accomplished? In the Reformed community today there is a strong feeling that we are not achieving our goal as we might. The feeling is to be found among students, teachers, and supporters alike.

The complaints to be heard vary widely. But among them are these: Students say that they are catechized instead of taught. The problems they are asked to consider come not from the concerns and anxieties of contemporary men, but solely from our own tradition; and the answers they are urged to accept don't fit our present world, but come from sixteenth century Europe or nineteenth century Holland. Teachers complain that students are passive and pedantic, moved by no issues, inspired by no ideals. They memorize their lessons and go through their paces; but thoughts are alien to them, and their vision is too short to spy the gleam of true scholarship. The supporters complain that our whole system is appallingly unproductive, yielding neither any fresh understanding of the past, nor any creative contributions for the future. These are the complaints to be heard; and more.

In calling attention to these dissatisfactions I am doing nothing new. Others have been doing the same for years. But what I wish to urge here is that any piece-meal attack on them must fail. For they are merely symptoms. The disease is somewhere else; namely, in the approach toward education which the predominant majority of us have adopted — some of us consciously, most of us unwittingly. The symptoms are consequences of the approach. To eliminate them, we must change the approach. So in what follows I should like to portray this approach, as I see it; and then argue for a better one.

Understanding

How *do* we approach education? Fundamentally, we view education as the achievement of understanding — understanding of ourselves and our place in the universe. It is understanders whom we wish, in our schools, to produce. So henceforth I shall call this the *Understanding* approach to education.

Now some hold that this goal of understanding is to be achieved simply by informing the student of the Calvinistic tradition. Education is then seen as a catechism, a species of indoctrination. But this view enjoys no wide acceptance. For most people agree that a Christian education must give the student an understanding of other traditions and views than his own, if for no other reason than better to understand and defend his own. So in what follows, I shall present the Understanding approach to education in its most widely accepted form. And I shall do so as persuasively as I can. For I wish eventually to argue that this view is inadequate; and I have no interest in beating a straw-man. It should be remembered, though, that it is the general pattern of the picture which is important. Perhaps no one will agree with every detail in the picture, as I present it.

The approach, and the argument behind it, goes something like this: Naively each of us tends to see himself as a self-made man. It is I who decide which job to take, whom to marry, what church to join, which possessions to covet, what coat to wear. But if you asked someone at a modern university how to go about understanding yourself, he would probably answer that you should study a good deal of psychology and sociology, and a bit of anthropology, and perhaps some economics. Back of his answer would be the conviction that human decisions are not freely made — that a man's will is molded and formed by the culture and tradition in which he finds himself. And the business of sociology, psychology, anthropology, etc., is thought to be the study of such influences.

But it's easy to see that such a view is radically incomplete. Modern intellectuals find the notion of individual freedom abhorrent. But they instinctively regard their culture itself as free and untied. Our own times, they say, are unique and novel, something new under the sun. Already in the father of modern philosophy, Descartes, these two opposing strains of thought can be seen. But in fact our whole culture is no more free and unconditioned than are we ourselves. If to understand ourselves we must to a great extent understand our culture, then to understand our culture we must to a great extent understand its past. We must go to history. For we are not weightless beings. The pull of history belongs to us.

Our own community has largely resisted this modern bias against history. We know that we are — all of us — inheritors. But just to establish the point that understanding cannot come without a knowledge of history, let me cite one simple example. Everyone nowadays expects science, each year, to produce new discoveries, thus abetting both our hopes and fears. And everyone regards mathematics as indispensable to natural science. These attitudes are now ingrained in us. But it was not al-

ways so. Not until the seventeenth or eighteenth centuries did the majority even of educated men believe that mathematics was the key to physical nature. And not until the nineteenth century did men begin to *expect* new discoveries. Before then, important discoveries were surprises and matters for general astonishment. So here is a clear case in which a fundamental part of our outlook has been conditioned by the past. It is neither something which we as individuals have decided to adopt, nor something built into human nature. And this is no more than one of the simplest out of a multitude of such cases. History, then, is the road to understanding. Bound up in the Understanding approach to education is an attitude toward history — toward all of history, not just toward the history of orthodox Protestantism.

Now at worst, studying history means memorizing dates and royal lines, and the causes of this and that. And studying our own tradition means learning a catechism. But at best it means a great deal more than this. For suppose we wish to study the Greeks, and so unravel a part of our inheritance. To do so we must study Greek philosophy, and Greek history, and Greek drama, and Greek sculpture. For a culture is all of a piece. And what we want to do is get within Greek culture, get inside the Greek mind, and so discern the pattern of all Greek thought and life. We want to make the acquaintance of the spirit animating the Greek people. We want to learn what it means to think and choose as a Greek; what it means to define right and wrong, and state and society, and love and justice, and the ends of science and art, when one thinks as a Greek. Only after a student has understood the history of the Greeks, *in this sense*, can he understand Plato. For though Plato was of course a professional philospher, he can't be understood by surveying the budget of philosophical problems over which he puzzled. Rather, we must see how he fits into his milieu, how the problems he faced sprang forth from Greek life, and how the solutions he proposed have entwined themselves through all succeeding European culture.

In a similar way we must study the middle ages, and the Reformation, and the modern world, and our own Calvinistic tradition. For each is all of a piece, a delicate unbroken web. A knowledge of history is to be gained by a knowledge of whole peoples, and ages, and cultures, and traditions. Of course, this is far more than history in the ordinary sense. Rather, it is what is usually called intellectual history. The Understanding approach to education regards intellectual history as the foundation of learning. An understanding of literature is to be gained by a knowledge of the history of literature. And a knowledge of the history of literature, by a knowledge of the intellectual history of the age in which a particular literary expression arose.

But the Understander does not yet regard this as the whole of education. If he did, it would be a repellingly passive process. For its goal would be the complete absorption of the student in past history and culture. There's more to it, though. For once the student has surveyed all of these past traditions, he must choose one of them. All of these traditions are vying for his allegiance; and he must commit himself. Education is the inter-play of understanding and commitment.

The fact that education is inseparable from commitment determines the way in which the Understander evaluates past men and cultures. No doubt it will happen now and then that a student, instead of struggling toward a historical understanding of Plato, will get it into his head to say, "But I think Plato here is wrong. His argument is incorrect." No one who adopts the Understanding approach to education would say that such a comment must invariably be mistaken and misguided. He would suspect, however, that the student was approaching Plato from the outside and not from the inside. Rather than criticizing Plato because he used certain arguments which, from our standpoint, are incorrect, we should pay attention to Plato's whole vision, and thus come to see how such an argument fits.

But if we are not to evaluate Plato by examining in detail the arguments which he uses to support his position, how then? Fundamentally, by pitting his commitment against ours. Any evaluation of Plato must, in essence, be nothing more than a substantiation of the thesis that Plato's commitment is different from ours. And, to take another example, the Catholic view on the nature of the church must in essence be evaluated by showing how it represents a commitment different from our own. The tremendous importance of knowing our own tradition then becomes apparent. For how else can we know whether a certain idea does or does not represent a commitment different from ours?

This, in essentials, is the Understanding approach to education. I cannot here indicate at which specific points I think it is correct, and at which specific points I think it is incorrect. But I do want to say, before I proceed, that I regard it as a very excellent and inspiring approach to education — far preferable to the insipid, Deweyan, life-adjustment approach current in American education.

But still, I think it's not quite the right view. For it seems to me that the *ultimate* aim of education should not be to get the student to understand himself, *though that should certainly be part of it*. The aim of education should rather be to make the student creative. In our education we should aim at producing creators, and not mere understanders. Consequently I shall call this the *Creative* approach to education. The word 'creative' is not a particularly good one for my purpose here. It's overly

dramatic, and nowadays it smacks of the artistic dilettante. But apart from this, I think it conveys what I wish to say.

Creating

All human life is caught up in process and change. No science, no art, no field of human endeavor, stands still. To this fact a person can make either of two responses. He can sit back, watch the panorama of history, and try to understand what others are doing and have done. Or he can plunge in, contribute to the process, and influence its course. It is our absolute responsibility to plunge in — to contribute to art, philosophy, science, theology, etc. And the responsibility is ours because we are Christians. As Christians all our education must be aimed to this end: To get our Christian community, as a whole, to make creative contributions to the culture of the twentieth century, thereby implementing our vision. Education should not be a passive, absorbent process; the student must be forced into activity and creativity. Education should not be like filling a kettle with water. It should be like lighting a fire under the kettle.

Hence our final aim should be the production of philosophers, and not merely of historians of philosophy. And our final aim should be the production of theologians, creative theologians, men contributing to the advancement of their science, and not merely of men who know what every other theologian has said. And our final aim should be the production of creative writers and artists, and not merely of men who know what others have written and painted. There can be no dispute that on all these fronts, and others, we are failing. But this is to be expected. For how, if we have taught a student only to understand, can we expect him suddenly to be creative? He will have neither the inclination to become so, nor will he have learned how.

Adopting the creative approach does not mean that we've got to scotch history and tradition. But it does mean that we must adopt an entirely new attitude towards history. The fundamental justification for studying history is not simply to understand ourselves; rather, it is to find aid in solving the problems which confront us in our own work. We must go to history and tradition armed with questions, and insistent upon answers. For our questions and our problems are not wholly new and novel. History must be viewed as our guide and teacher — and that a very good one, though not yet an infallible one. The weight of history must not crush us.

Thus when we have taught a student the history of an important idea or institution, we are not yet done with him. We must then together address ourselves to the most important question of all: Is the idea right or wrong? Is the institution good or bad? We cannot be content with students who know what Plato said, and how his forebears influenced what he said, and how he influenced what his successors said. We must consider the problems to which Plato addressed himself, the perennial philosophical problems, and decide whether his solutions were right or wrong. By so doing, we may hope to come to solutions of our own. And our own tradition, too, is not to be viewed as something into which we can comfortably sink ourselves; but as something which gives us aid and guidance in the pursuit of our own tasks and problems. In studying Kuyper, for example, we must not simply ask what he said; we must ask "Is it true?" We may no more accept uncritically all the elements in our own tradition, than we may the elements in some other tradition. The question of the history of an idea must always be secondary to the question of the truth of the idea.

BUT HOW CAN A STUDENT BE MADE CREATIVE? THAT is a subject for an article in itself. For the answer is: It all depends on the nature of the subject, on the maturity of the student, on the stage of education, etc. A creative philosopher is produced in a different way from a creative poet, and a creative poet in a different way from a creative scientist. And grade-school students must be handled differently from college students. So to the question "How?" I have no simple easy answer. At best, I can answer the question intelligently only for my own field. But I think the answers will come if we want them, if we want to ask the question and really want to have it answered.

But someone might raise a protest at this point, to this effect: Why isn't our own tradition, our Calvinistic tradition, good enough? Why *should* the student do more than understand? To what end should he create? To this protest there are many answers. In the first place, our tradition is a human tradition, and so, it is fallible. Hence it would be irresponsible to accept uncritically what our fathers have said. Our primary business is always, each time anew, to ask whether what they said was true. But even if our tradition *were* infallible, it would still be our duty to go beyond mere understanding. For the tradition is incomplete. Our task is not done. Our vision has not yet received its full articulation, and the boundaries of science and art have not yet been reached. But even if this were not so, even if our tradition *were* infallible and our vision *were* fully articulated, it would still be our duty to go beyond mere understanding. For in every age new attacks against Christianity are mounted, fresh difficulties are raised, new problems created. And so in every age again we must rethink and reformulate what we have said, sort out the essential from the accidental, and so confront the world. For all these reasons

our aim must be creativity and not mere understanding.

Explaining

Now if I am right in holding that our fundamental approach to education has been that of the understander and not the creator, a great many features of our community can be explained. Of course these features have been noticed before; but they now can be seen to fit into a pattern.

We can explain our way of teaching theology. In teaching theology to mature students, do we aim to acquaint them with the problems of theology? Or do we simply aim to catechize them on the Reformed view? The problem of the authority of the Scriptures is today a crucial issue. What might a course which attempted to deal with this problem, and arrive at its solution, be like? I imagine that in such a course the teacher would show the importance of the question, go with his students through the whole mass of literature on the issue, pursue all its ins and outs, point out which avenues are closed and which are open, etc. And perhaps at the end every student would be asked to write a paper in which, bearing in mind all the difficulties, he defended some conclusion. But I think we very seldom, if ever, give this kind of careful, cautious, and thorough attention to theological problems. The question of tradition always seems to dominate, the question of truth to be shunted aside. Yet surely theological problems are far too important to be treated with any less than the greatest care and sobriety which we can muster.

We can explain our manner of citing authorities. Do we ordinarily quote Calvin and Kuyper in order to get some aid and guidance in the answering of our questions? I think not. Ordinarily we quote them in order to silence our opponents. We use them as a club. We quote them in order to prove that our opponent is not being quite orthodox. But surely this is doing our tradition less than justice. Calvin's concern was always the truth. And he gave reasons for saying what he said. We slight Calvin if we fail to consider, and judge, those reasons.

We can explain our intense dislike of any indecision, and of any man who, on an important issue, says "I don't know." We always want our answers immediately, though of course everyone knows in his heart that reasoned answers to hard questions don't come immediately. And so we settle issues by arbitrary and hasty decisions, just to have them settled. We can't bear to wrestle with problems. Back of this, I think, is our tendency always to construe any disagreements as fundamental disagreements, as indicating some basic and elemental difference of commitment. We don't seem to understand that a person need neither accept a tradition all in one piece, nor reject it al in one piece.

We can explain our distrust of the arts, ou nervousness when confronted with a painting or piece of literature which can't immediately be fitte into some stock familiar pattern, and our conse quent failure to produce any original works of art We can explain, for instance, our inclination t spend all our time on the history of literature, an not to produce any literature. For in art, under standing is *per se* not enough; creativity is de manded. Of course creativity in art is a har thing to come to terms with; the evaluation of truly original piece of art is always exceedingl difficult. But this is no reason for discouragin the experiment.

And we can explain the fact that from our whol educational system so little scholarly research ap pears. This defect too has often been noticed. Bu usually it has been attributed to some widespread laziness among our educators and students, or to universal lack of talent, or to a shortage of time But it seems highly improbable that these shoul be the complete explanation. Rather, I think th fundamental cause lies in a lack of motivation And this lack of motivation comes in turn fro the fact that we have adopted the passive, under standing approach to education. We don't aim ou teaching toward the production of creative and pro ductive scholars. Scholarship means something different for us.

NOW FINALLY IT MIGHT BE ASKED: WHY ARE WE this way? Why have we committed ourselves s heavily to the understanding approach? To thi question there are no doubt a great number o answers. But let me suggest two.

For one thing, we are Christians. And the Christian doesn't think the latest thing is neces sarily the best. He doesn't just want to be con temporary. For the historical Christian revelation and the historical community of Christians, are t us of inestimable importance. And so there wil always be a kind of tension in our lives. For we must on the one hand never underestimate the im portance of history and tradition; and we must on the other hand never underestimate the impor tance of the contemporary. The Christian must be both contemporary, and not contemporary.

For another thing, we as a Reformed community feel insecure. We don't feel confident in confront ing the problems of the world around us. And so we have insulated ourselves, and construed our identity almost wholly in terms of our own tradi tion. History is for us an escape, a shell into which we retreat. For it is easier to pursue the history of an idea than to evaluate its truth. And it is safer to read and criticize what someone else has contributed, than to contribute something of one's

own. Adopting the creative approach would mean breaking out of our shell. And this is a risk. For how do I know, when I force my student to think for himself about the problems of philosophy, that he won't pick a solution which seems to me radically mistaken? How do I know, when I force my student to work over the problems of theology, that he won't pick a solution which seems to me undeniably unorthodox? How do I know, when I force my student to be a creative artist, that he won't produce something which I find ugly and unacceptable? I don't. The creative approach is filled with risk. But the risk and the promise come together.

Reformed Scholarship and Infallibility

by Harry R. Boer

THIS COMING SUMMER THE SYNOD OF THE CHRISTIAN Reformed Church will have on its agenda a report dealing with the problem of the infallibility of Scripture. This report has not yet been published, but it is clear from all that has been written on the question that it will be received and read with great interest.

I think most will now agree that the publicity that has been given to the issue has been most unfortunate. The Church is in the first place a religious, not a theological community. While the Church as a whole may have and should have its theological reflection, this reflection ought always to be within the scope of its competence to judge. The Gereformeerden in the Netherlands understand, I think, this distinction better than we. Subjects of an academic or predominantly technical nature, particularly if controversial, are not quickly aired in the general church press there. The publicity that has taken place among us on the issue of infallibility, particularly the alarmistic and condemnatory kind, has done much to disturb the average simple believer and little to reassure him.

The subject now before us belongs in first order to the academic area. That is where it was first broached and that is where it should have stayed, at least until it became more evident than has up to now been the case that the integrity of our Christian and, for that matter, of our specifically Reformed witness was at stake.

How little these fundamental concerns are really at issue and, at the same time, how substantial and complex are the theological problems involved, this article wishes to indicate.

Although I am schooled neither in the intricacies of nor in the vast literature dealing with the problem of authorship, dates and manner of composition of the books of the Bible, I confess to considerable interest in it. In the course of off-and-on reading in the field I have come across material that would seem to have particular relevance to the problem as it at present confronts our Reformed community. What this article wishes to do, therefore, is to engage in some reporting. The reporting will be on this particular question: What do Reformed theologians who have among us an eminent name for orthodoxy in biblical scholarship say about the problem we are wrestling with? When we look beyond our own denominational borders to men whom we trust and see how they approach the question, the fearful among us may become assured that no shaking of the foundations of the Christian faith is threatened by the present framework of discussion, and those who would open new perspectives in biblical scholarship may take heart from what good Reformed men have said before them.

IT IS GENERALLY SUPPOSED AMONG US THAT IN scholarly Reformed circles there is no question about the outright repudiation of higher critical methods and about the acceptance of the literal infallibility of the Bible. This is about as far from the truth as east is from west. When I consider how men, whom we in the Christian Reformed Church regard as impeccably orthodox, treat the Old Testament (to limit ourselves only to that field), I see a situation that is simply spilling over with ambiguity. Let us consider a few examples of this situation.

In all of Reformed exegetical literature there is from the viewpoint of orthodoxy no more accepted work than the Dutch *Korte Verklaring* (Short Commentary). It has been written in its entirety by Gereformeerde scholars (one or more volumes on every book of the Bible). In all the years that it has existed, I have never heard a word of criticism about it either in the Netherlands or among us. It graces the shelves of thousands of devout Christians, ministerial as well as lay, and is regarded as an authoritative if not official Reformed interpretation of the entire Bible. With this in mind, let us look at what A. Noordtzij (of the Free University of Amsterdam) has to say about the composition of Leviticus, in his commentary on that book — one of the *Korte Verklaring* series.

In the Introduction to this commentary, he reflects on the discontinuous character of substantial

sections of the book: Chapter 16 should be connected with chapter 10; verses 10-23 of chapter 24 stand apparently without connection; chapter 27 sustains no connection to chapter 26, and so on. How is this all to be explained?

The traditional explanation of these phenomena is that Moses wrote Leviticus in stages separated by intervals of time, and as a result we get a more or less disconnected whole. This view, says Noordtzji, is erroneous. Although most of Leviticus assumes the background of Israel's wandering in the wilderness, other parts can be explained only from the fact of Israel's settlement in Canaan. These sections have been inserted later and account for the discontinuity. Thus the author cites numerous examples of ordinances which are introduced with the words, "the Lord said to Moses," *which the Lord in fact never spoke to Moses, nor did they ever occur to Moses to give them to Israel.* Examples are references to the distinction between the native and the stranger, the shekel of the sanctuary, cities of the Levites, the poor who cannot afford an offering for cleansing, and others. Noordtzij completely rejects the idea that these were prophetically given to Moses with a view to the future residence of Israel in Canaan. They arose, he says, out of the situation that developed in Canaan long after Israel's entry into it and therefore long after Moses' death. He believes that it was not until the time of Solomon (about three hundred and fifty years after Moses) that Leviticus as we now have it was made final. Much of what God is attributed as having said to Moses He never in fact said to him. Much of what God is attributed as having said to the children of Israel while they were wandering in the wilderness He did not in fact say to them at that time. It was written later, says Noordtzij, and under wholly different circumstances than a non-critical reading of the book would lead one to believe.

In his commentary on Numbers, the same author follows the same line, if anything more aggressively. Israel's order of march in chapter 2 could not possibly have been the one we read in this chapter. Neither the numbers mentioned nor the names of the leaders given are in place here. This is all from a later pen. The report of Israel's battle with Og in 21:33-35 was later added from Deuteronomy 3:1-3. The order in which the names of the leaders appear under whom the partition of Cannan took place dates in any case from post-Mosaic times since the order given corresponds to the South to North order of the later residence of the tribes in Canaan. Nevertheless, this pericope (34:16-29) is introduced by the words, "The Lord said to Moses." The account in 15:32-36 about the man who gathered sticks on the sabbath was written by "the writer" at a time when the wilderness wandering was a matter of the past. In 8:25-26 the Levites begin their work in their twenty-fift year, in 4:3, 23, 30 they begin in their thirtiet year. These data cannot have come from the sam time. Chapter 4 is probably a later stipulation Chapter 19 is clearly composite. And so the autho goes on and on. While the basis of Numbers i clearly Mosaic legislation, there were revisions afte the entry into Canaan and these revisions are a directly attributed to Moses as was the origina legislation. It is clear that what we have is no some incidental editing that leaves the origina substantially in its first form but a revision an addition that extensively alters if not the purpose message, and spirit of the original, yet certainl the content of it. It is also clear that on this read ing there are a number of statements which ar neither true to the facts of history nor in corres pondence with the impression which a fair perusa leaves in the mind of the reader. So writes Pro fessor Noordtzij.

These emphases adduced from Noordtzij ar reenforced in G. C. H. Aalders's *Oud Testamentisch Kanoniek,* 1952, a large and scholarly work on Ol Testament Introduction. In his discussion of th Pentateuch (around which the great debates abou higher criticism and infallibility have centered) h devotes a section to "Mosaica, post-Mosaica, a Mosaica," in which he cites some eighteen or nine teen instances of materials in the Pentateuch tha could not have been written by Moses. How is thi to be explained? The solution is that the Pentateuc as a whole "is to be regarded as a compilation mad in later time in which the sizable literary data be queathed by Moses have been taken up and in whic it may be assumed that ante-Mosaic as well as post Mosaic materials have been used" (p. 136). H rejects as not acceptable a description of the forma tion of the Pentateuch given by Professor E. J Young, "that the Pentateuch as it stands is histori cal and from the time of Moses; and that Mose was its real author, though it may have been re vised and edited by later redactors, the additions being just as inspired and true as the rest" (p. 137) On the contrary, says Aalders, "we are convince that a later compilator has produced the Pentateuc using in so doing extensive Mosaic and other mate rial, and that the Pentateuch thus produced wa inspired by God's Spirit and is fully credible an reliable." In viewing the Pentateuch in this way "we must acknowledge that, notwithstanding it abundant Mosaic material, it is an anonymous piec of historical writing" (p. 137). With respect t the historical as distinct from the legislative ma terial in the Pentateuch, "we must unhesitatingl confess that the compilator took more liberty wit the Mosaic data than was the case in the legislativ sections." Further, "we may assume in genera that this historical account which treats of th

Mosaic period has not been taken over wholly literally from the itinerary provided by Moses, but every effort to be exact here is foredoomed to failure" (p. 140). All of which, in Aalders's view, adds up to this: the Pentateuch was completed late in the reign of Saul or early in the reign of David, that is, about 1000 B.C. or at least two hundred and fifty years at the earliest after the time of Moses. On another and widely accepted dating of the Exodus this would be more than four hundred years after the time of Moses.

BEFORE PROCEEDING TO OTHER EXAMPLES, LET US ask just what these instances cited above signify. It is hardly possible to do so without alluding briefly to that aspect of biblical study known as higher criticism.[1] Since the middle of the nineteenth century Old Testament scholarship has more and more come to reject the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. The pendulum of critical study has swung widely but has now, with much of the early excrescences cut out, come to a position of relative stability in which the following thesis is generally accepted:

The Pentateuch is a composite piece of writing comprised of the union or fusion of four basic documents: the J document, which was written about 950 B.C. (the time of Solomon); the E document, written about 750 B.C. (thirty years before the captivity of the Northern kingdom); the D document, written about one hundred years after that; and the P document, written sometime after the captivity of the Southern kingdom, 587 B.C. All of these, together known as JEDP, were about the year 400 B.C. fused into what we know today as the Pentateuch, or the Five Books of Moses. This means that large parts of the Pentateuch are regarded as having been written as much as seven hundred years after the time in which Moses lived. It does *not* mean, however, that these parts or, for that matter, the earlier written parts, were just conjured up by later unknown writers. Most Old Testament critical scholarship today recognizes that what was finally put into writing is based upon a solid foundation of Israelitic tradition dating from the time of the Patriarchs, and particularly of Mosaic legislation which dominates the entire Pentateuch.

Whatever one may think of this theory (generally referred to as the documentary hypothesis), he has no right to question either the Christian character or the motivation of those who hold this view simply because they hold it. Many who accept the documentary hypothesis would unhesitatingly associate themselves with the words of S. R. Driver in his well-known work, *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament* (ninth edition, 1913), when he writes,

> Criticism in the hands of Christian scholars does not banish or destroy the inspiration of the Old Testament; it *presupposes* it; it seeks only to determine the conditions under which it operates, and the literary forms through which it manifests itself; and it thus helps us to frame true conceptions of the methods which it has pleased God to employ in revealing himself to his ancient people Israel, and in preparing the way for the fuller manifestation of himself in Christ Jesus (p. xiii).

With this as background, we want to make plain that Aalders and Noordtzij repudiate the documentary hypothesis. They expressly say so. But it is not the documentary hypothesis that makes higher criticism. It is higher criticism that makes the documentary hypothesis. It would seem to be very clear that both Aalders and Noordtzij have imbibed more than one draft of higher critical waters, and one who drinks deeply or even not so deeply there must necessarily have reservations with respect to the traditional view of the infallibility of Scripture, as it is only too plain that Aalders and Noordtzij do. It is clearly impossible to detect any substantial difference between what they say about the basic means involved in the formation of the Pentateuch and what an acknowledged believer in JEDP as B. W. Anderson holds when he writes in his widely accepted book *Understanding the Old Testament* (1957), that although the J and E narratives were written down in the period of the monarchy, "they not only reflect the interests of their day but also preserve material from earlier periods. Some of the JE material in the book of Exodus goes back to the time of Moses; some of it reflects Israel's life in the agricultural situation of Canaan — that is, the time of Joshua and later" (p. 52). Again, "Does all this mean that no laws were transmitted from the Mosaic period, but only a sense of absolute

1. Many lay readers will perhaps ask, Just what is higher criticism? A good definition of it is given by James Orr in the conservative and among us highly esteemed *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia.* He writes, "An important part of its work is the analysis of books, with a view to determining their component parts (e. g., J, E, D, P of the Pentateuch), the age, origin and characteristics of each, their connection with external conditions and the state of belief and life of the time." In his judgment higher criticism is "invaluable as an aid in the domain of Biblical introduction (date, authorship, genuineness, contents, destination, etc.)" but it "manifestly tends to widen out illimitably into regions where exact science cannot follow it, where, often, the critic's imagination is his only law . . . . It would be wrong, however, to deny the legitimate place of 'higher criticism' or belittle the great services it is capable of rendering because of the abuses to which it is liable."

Writing his article in 1915, Orr made a prophecy which has in some measure come true, namely, "It is too early yet to forecast results, but the opinion may be hazarded that . . . the prevailing critical theory of the Old Testament will experience fundamental alteration nearer to older ideas, though it is too much to expect that traditional views will ever be resuscitated in their completeness." How completely true this latter statement about the death of the unqualified old order is with respect to conservative biblical scholarship particularly among the Gereformeerde scholars in the Netherlands is underscored by the present review.

responsibility to the will of God that had to be spelled out in detail later on? Some scholars have answered this question in the affirmative. But on the basis of recent studies of the form and content of laws in the Pentateuch, we can affirm with a high degree of probability that the Jewish tradition which traces the law back to Moses has a solid basis of historical fact" (p. 55).

It is true that Anderson's view of revelation, while acknowledging the objective aspect of revelation, emphasizes the subjective element, while Aalders and Noordtzij strongly stress the objective. The specific question before us here is not the nature of the revelation, however, but rather how the revelation received its inscripturated form. On this point I see a difference in degree but not a difference in substance between the approach of Aalders and Noordtzij on the one hand and that of Anderson and the higher critics in general on the other hand. I do not recall the page reference, but somewhere in his book Aalders affirms his belief in the infallibility of Scripture. It is very evident from what he writes that if this protestation is intended to be more than an assurance of his orthodox integrity, he uses the word with reservations which, if they were made explicit, would materially limit the usual understanding of the word "infallible" as applied to Scripture.

WHEN IT IS HELD BY HIGHER CRITICS THAT Deuteronomy was not written by Moses or that the writer of Isaiah 40-66 was in all probability a person other than the Isaiah who wrote chapters 1-39, there is a great stirring in the camp of the "conservatives" and the ramparts are manned to defend the truth against its detractors. But when it says in Ecclesiastes 1:1, "The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem," and in 1:12, "I the Preacher have been king over Israel in Jerusalem," which the Church has always understood as referring to Solomon, it is perfectly all right for so dauntless a foe of the higher critics as Professor E. J. Young to write,

> The language and diction of the book apparently point to a time later than that of Solomon . . . . In all probability the book is to be dated about the time of Malachi [about five hundred years after Solomon]. The political background seems to be satisfactory, and this period would also satisfy the linguistic phenomena.
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> The author of the book, then, was one who lived in the post-exilic period and who placed his words in the mouth of Solomon, thus employing a literary device for conveying his message (*An Introduction to the Old Testament* [1953], p. 340).

Now it is precisely "language and diction," "political background" and "linguistic phenomena" that lead critics to other than traditional conclusions about dates and authorship. Professor Aalders dates the book at about the same time as Professor Young. Must we conclude that it is all right for Reformed scholars to apply literary and historical criteria to the study of the Bible but not for higher critics? Whence do we derive this monopoly? The writer of Ecclesiastes, according to Professor Young, intended that Solomon should be understood to be the author. But now it appears that a man who was not king over Israel, who in fact lived when Israel had no king, who for all we know may never have been in Jerusalem, and who sustained no relationship of which we know to the royal house, is solemnly declared to have written Ecclesiastes. Moreover, how does Professor Young square this analysis with what he writes in another connection:

> If an unknown prophet or group of prophets composed Deuteronomy, it is strange that they should have labored so hard to make it appear that the book was the work of Moses. Such a procedure is without analogy in Scripture. The prophets always came forth openly and spoke in the name of the Lord . . . . There is a psychological difficulty involved in the assumption that prophets of Jehovah would secretly produce a work such as Deuteronomy and rely upon the name of Moses to carry their message.
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> Suppose, however, after all, that such men were the authors. There is one conclusion that cannot be evaded or escaped. It is that they were dishonest men. They sought to give the impression that Deuteronomy was the work of Moses, whereas in reality it was nothing of the kind. They, therefore, were not good men . . . [and] were engaging in deceit when they sought to give the impression that the writing which they produced was the work of someone else (*My Servants the Prophets* [1952], p. 15).

Let us note again that Professor Young adduces as norms for concluding to the anonymous fifth-century authorship of Ecclesiastes "language and diction," "political background," and "linguistic phenomena," and that he apparently regards as valid the "literary device" of placing the message of the book in the mouth of Solomon who lived in the tenth century B.C. What other norms and standards do higher critics adduce for attributing, say, Isaiah 40-66 to a later author than the Isaiah who wrote the first part of the book? A very important argument always adduced to establish the full Isaianic authorship is the consideration that the Lord Jesus himself quotes from the chapters concerned and attributes the words to Isaiah by name. A more self-defeating argument would be hard to discover. According to the doctrine of verbal inspiration the most obscure and little used parts of the Old Testament are as fully, as truly, and as completely inspired by the Holy Spirit as anything the Lord Jesus ever said. However much more important and normative the words of Christ may be than passages in Leviticus, Chronicles, or Esther, they cannot possibly, according to the accepted doctrine, be *more true*. If internal evidence may be

allowed, without prejudice to the doctrine of verbal inspiration, to deny the authorship of Ecclesiastes explicitly attributed to "the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem," or if it may be held that in particular cases the words "the Lord said to Moses" were not actually spoken by the Lord to Moses, there would seem to be no reason at all why it is inherently wrong for internal evidence to point to anoymous authorship in other areas. How can the imprimatur and inspiration of the Holy Spirit be considered to lie over and in all of Scripture in equal degree, and at the same time the acceptance of "literary devices" be allowed as valid in one case and rejected as "deceit" and "dishonest" in other cases, with the clearly implied conclusion that the acceptance of devices in the latter cases is evidence of disloyalty to Scripture? Would Professor Young say that if somewhere Jesus had referred to Solomon as having said this or that in Ecclesiastes his norms of "language and diction," "political background," and "linguistic phenomena" would suddenly fall away?

A FINAL EXAMPLE MUST CONCLUDE THIS DISCUSSION. Some five or six years ago Dr. N. Ridderbos, successor to Professor Aalders in the chair of Old Testament at the Free University, Amsterdam, published a paper on the exegesis of the first chapter of Genesis. It was subsequently translated and published in English under the title *Is There a Conflict Between Genesis* 1 *and Natural Science?* There never were, says the Professor, six days of creation. Nor were there ever six periods of creation which might loosely be termed days. In fact, the account in Genesis 1 was never intended to be a description of how the world was created. We have not the slightest idea of how it came into being. The Hebrew writer (who is other than the writer of the second chapter of Genesis) wanted to say this: God is Creator, all else is creature, at whose head stands man. How should he say this? After careful reflection as to the best "frame" or "form" in which to express this thought, the writer chose the device now lying before us in Genesis 1.

How this is to be squared with infallibility is a bit puzzling. Professor Young, who apart from obvious inconsistency, as noted above, is an articulate exponent of the traditional conception of infallibility, read the booklet "with sorrow of heart. For even though the author may not wish it, it is a book that will tend to weaken one's confidence in the infallibility of Holy Scripture." Professor Young also noted Dr. Ridderbos's obviously wide acquaintance with higher critical literature. But in the Gereformeerde Kerken there has hardly been a ripple of reaction. When this treatise was reviewed in *The Banner*, Nov. 22, 1957, by Rev. M. Woudstra, he concluded his mainly reportorial discussion by saying that he "should like to have a great many questions answered before he could say whether this writing has brought us any closer to a correct understanding of the problem discussed" — which is a wise and commendable attitude, but which hardly sounds like a criticism one would expect from a viewpoint dedicated to belief in the infallibility of the Bible.

To what conclusion does all this bring us? It would seem that when "our men" show themselves to be deeply influenced by higher critical norms and follow similar procedures and arrive at similar conclusions as do the higher critics, then there is no serious problem. They assert their belief in the infallibility of Scripture and they repudiate the extreme and unbelieving higher critical teaching of Wellhausen. From that point on they are in various degrees at least on talking terms with higher criticism. The same principles and methods that lead higher critics to the acceptance of JEDP lead "our men" to the acceptance of compilers, composite structure, dual authorship for Genesis 1 and 2, the attribution to anonymous post-Mosaic authors of what Scripture explicitly attributes to Moses, the making of a "frame" of what has always been considered to be sober divine action, the use of political or historical data and of linguistic phenomena to attribute to an unknown author in the fifth century B.C. a work which from the record and by acknowledged author's intent is to be understood as a book written by Solomon. And withal there is among us a general acceptance of these presentations without any of the kind of criticism that greeted the appearance in a student publication of a suggestion that there may be peripheral historical contradictions in the Bible.

This article is a report on some things that I have discovered in reading and study relative to the issue of the infallibility of Scripture now before us. I have also raised some questions which these data inevitably elicit. Is it not time that we consider what we have been living with? Should we not take a good hard look at what has been going on in our own theological community? Do we agree with it? If not, at what far remove in the theological community do we come to stand? And what is our answer to this "liberalism" in our own ranks? If, on the other hand, we do accept these positions and methods as valid or, at all events, as having right to existence without prejudice to the Reformed integrity of their authors, should we not wish to re-evaluate the meaning of the expression "infallible" in its application to Scripture?

One thing is certain: Holy Scripture, grandly moving from Creation through Christ to Consummation, written by the Prophets and the Apostles, is the very Word of God which, when its message is mediated to us by the truly infallible Holy Spirit through faith, can never be lost or fail of its intended effect.

Reflections on Theology From A Canoe

by M. Eugene Osterhaven

Of all the exercises in which he may find himself engaged, theological reflection is one of the most stimulating and important for the Christian. I say "Christian" because professional theologians, ministers of the Word and professors of theology, are not the only persons who reflect on the subject matter of theology. I do not even qualify the noun with an adjective because it is not only *informed* Christians, or *intelligent* Christians who ought to reflect on God and his relation to men. *All* Christians should "think on these things." Those who refuse to do so, consciously or unconsciously, take their faith with less than desirable seriousness, and some may have no faith at all. "Meditate on these things; give thyself wholly to them." That apostolic injunction given to Timothy is valid for us today.

When does one reflect on theology, however? If he is a theological student he reflects on it when he is in school. If he ministers to a congregation he ponders it mornings in his study and when he is at certain meetings and conferences.

The Christian can also give attention to theology in less formal settings, however, when he is alone of an evening, when he plows the fields at high noon, or when he milks the cows early in the day. He may reflect on it during convalescence from an illness and in the night watches when sleep refuses to refresh his tired frame. The "highest science" may also occupy his thoughts when he is pursuing a hobby, particularly if his hobby carries him outdoors. One minister combines fishing with theological reflection and has read hundreds of psalms in his waders, with the river and uncaught fish passing by. A setting in nature is especially propitious for communion with God and meditation on his relation to us. For does not Scripture inform us that the universe "is before our eyes as a most elegant book wherein all creatures, great and small, are as so many characters leading us to contemplate the invisible things of God" (*The Confession of Faith,* II)? It cannot, indeed, tell us all that is necessary for us to know since sin has disturbed our relation to deity and has darkened human understanding. A *special* revelation from God is now necessary to restore us to communion with Him, but a setting in the midst of nature is peculiarly advantageous for reflection on *its* God who is also *our* God and for meditation on those other truths which He sets before us in his books of nature and of grace.

I

In no way can one get a better *appreciation f God's revelation in nature* than by canoe. Ju "any old place" will not do, however, but the can must be in the right kind of environment and becomes merely the means by which the latter explored and enjoyed. One can live the year arou on a lake and yet seldom put a canoe in it, as true of our family. It is not the canoe that mak the outing but "God's country" through which takes one. Whether the trip be a two-day run dow the Pine or a week on the ample waters of Ontari abundant evidence of the glory of God's handiwor is seen. But one must have eyes to see it and, havin eyes, he must see!

Many there are who in the midst of nature neve see. To such what we are here describing woul be sheer boredom and the sole criteria by which the would judge the trip would be the food and th fishing, and the latter particularly would have t be good. That is *not* the way I care to do it. Foo and fishing are incidental with me. I can eat a home, and if I were only interested in fishing I woul go to a fishing camp and have a guide take m "where they are" so that I could pull "em up an put 'em back in." I go canoeing for the sheer jo of being in nature. The truth is that I enjoy it s much that I would go it alone if others were no available to make the trip even more pleasant an worthwhile.

Consider the winding river with its ever-changin bottom. First it flows smoothly between banks o spruce, birch, and aspen with tag alders and shrub of infinite variety along the water's edge. The it runs through cedar flats as impenetrable as the seem forbidding when a camp site is being sough for the night. When the ground rises with stee banks on either side, the trees turn again to conifer and birches and the speed of the water and occa sional rocks in the stream are omens of rough wate ahead. Then you hear it, at first in the distanc and then, if the river is large, a frightening roa which makes you happy to spot the portage.

The carry completed, you notice what seems to b a newspaper rising out of the water as a heron flie lazily and settles just beyond the second bend onl to repeat the performance a dozen times befor mustering the energy for the long flight back Fish dart temptingly by and various forms of wild

life make their appearance along the river bank, some to gaze in seeming wide-eyed wonder and others to scurry off to the safety of the forests or to disappear beneath the surface of the water. We once surprised two otters playing in the river. They barked upon seeing us, dived, and swam like greased lightning past the canoe. We have had mother ducks entice us to follow them a half-mile down the river while the ducklings huddled under a bush of refuge. After they were satisfied that we were unaware of their fuzzy brood the mothers would take off and circle wide for the return. Twice we have come on moose with their calves in the river. Once in the spring a little one, not more than a week or two old, could not get out of the water and the mother let it bawl until we had gone by. We thanked the glum lady for restraining her anger and letting us by and then went on. A thousand things clamor for your interest while the soul drinks in, in humble measure, the wonder and beauty of creation.

When camp has been made and the sun has set you hear the night noises which have a charm of their own. Tremulous-voiced owls replace the raucous cries of blue jays, night insects strike up their chorus, and a wolf or a cayote sends a chill down your spine. On the first long trip I took, one which lasted a month and which I made in my teens, a bobcat yelled twice in a tall tree on the opposite bank leaning out over the river. The first time I was sitting cross-legged before a fire and the second time I was in my sack. Both cries made me leave the ground for a split second as the vision of a dead lynx that had been shown me two days before flashed across my mind. The hunter, probably with tongue in cheek, said that we should be careful for "link-cats," as he called them, for they lay in trees and liked to drop on objects below. The next day, with elevated eyes which searched each overhanging tree, I went down the river!

You will not notice the stars or, in late summer, the northern lights until your campfire burns low. Then you will see them and know that the night sky is never so glorious as in the north country. The stars shine like jewels in heaven, and aurora borealis has a beauty which mere words cannot describe. When it covers the sky, the lights are like drapes drawn across God's dwelling-place with celestial stage lights of many colors playing against them while they slowly turn and roll. On the lake near the mouth of the river a loon gives his last silly cry and then the silence of eternity seems to close in.

What do you think of then? What crosses your mind after a big day with the camp work done and the fire burning low? Many little thoughts undoubtedly, and one great consideration — God! And the reason that God will be present to your consciousness is usually described as general revelation. God has been present *in his creation* all along the way. It has not only been nature that you have seen but evidences of nature's God as well. For are not all these wonders of creation proofs of his divine wisdom, majesty, and power?

> Look unto the heavens and see;
> And behold the skies which are higher than thou.
>
> He sitteth above the circle of the earth,
> And the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers;
> He stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain,
> And spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in.

Calvin's appreciation for the immanence of God in creation is such that when refuting the position of pagan philosophers he yet feels it well to concede that the expression that "nature is God may be used in a pious sense by a pious mind." But, he says, since the expression is "harsh and inconsistent with strict propriety of speech, nature being rather an order prescribed by God" it is better to use language that does not confound the deity with his works.[1] "The heavens declare the glory of God. We grow aware, as we behold them, of a light which proceeds not only from the sun and stars. Through all his creation, as through a transparent substance, there shines the presence of God."[2] It is little wonder that after protracted consideration Kant found the starry heavens one of the two reasons that his mind was filled with wonder and reverential awe.[3] The endless variety, wonder and beauty of the natural world are reminiscent of and witnesses to God. "There is not an atom of the world in which you cannot behold some brilliant sparks at least of his glory."[4] This is indeed our Father's world, a "theater," as Calvin often calls it, in which he displays his infinite perfections.

II

Another lesson impressed upon the spiritually sensitive person who spends time in stream and forest is his *dependence upon God.* The artificial character of much of modern life tends to obscure this fact. Urban living with its convenience and luxury enables one to forget the fragility of all this human fabrication and that he is wholly dependent on God for everything, from the five dollar dinner that he has just had at the club to the performance of his five thousand dollar automobile made and run from materials hid in the earth's crust by the creator. Back on the farm it was easier to remember this truth, for living close to the soil seemed to keep a person close to God. Constant

1. *Institutes*, I. v, v.
2. E. F. Scott, *The New Testament Idea of Revelation*, p. 48.
3. *The Critique of Practical Reason*, Conclusion.
4. Calvin, *op. cit.*, I, v, i.

dependence on the elements of nature for harvest and livelihood helped alert one to his ultimate dependence on God for all things.

Getting out into the wilderness helps recover this most desirable attitude. The canoeist rests on the shore of a lake with no other sign of civilization around. His own puniness in the face of the magnitude of nature and of nature's God is brought home to him. It takes little to frighten him. A severe electrical storm, a misjudged run through rapids, or a rise in wind velocity when he is on a lake may be sufficient. Once when I had five teen-age boys on Lake Kabinakagami two hundred-eighty miles north of the Soo I allowed myself to be persuaded against my better judgment to wait until the last day before heading for the railroad and home. We rose early to try to beat the wind in a seven mile haul to the Oba River portage but it had been blowing for several days and diminished little that night. Prudence would have kept us off the lake that day. But we loaded the canoes and started, only to swamp and drag ourselves out of the water on the nearest island one-half mile distant. The ride on that large lake, thirty miles long with many peninsulas and one-hundred-seventy-seven islands, was finally completed, thanks to a motor and ponchos which served as decks to keep the water out of the canoes. But the experience, mild though it was compared to the experiences of others, served to remind us of human frailty before nature and of our dependence on Him who can calm the wind and the seas. An occasional scare is a wholesome experience. One is reminded that he is only a man and no god, and that he ever stands in need of divine protection and care.

III

A further reflection gained through experiences with a canoe is the *desirability of acquiring new perspective.* Perspective is insight into the relative value of facts or experiences with respect to their proportional importance. Such insight is most valuable in teaching, in preaching, indeed, in all of life. When a teacher is lacking in perspective he is a poor guide for youth. When a spiritual leader of a community lacks it, he is unable to separate the wheat from the chaff in his study or to distinguish the essential from the non-essential in his total ministry. *In media rerum* one sometimes loses a sense of proportion. He is so deep into the woods that he can no longer see the hilltop; the night traveler is so preoccupied with his footing that he neglects to keep an eye on the north star.

Most of us experience that our work is never finished; there is more that remains to be done than one can ever hope to accomplish. One gets so bogged down in his work that his spirits sag and his efficiency is impaired. Detail which should be dispatched easily becomes a burden and the larger tasks assume Herculean proportions. The more one frets about his lack of productivity, only privately or to his wife, of course, the harder it becomes to produce and the less he gets done. The less he gets done the more he frets. Caught in a vicious circle he feels like griping at someone, *anyone,* about something, *anything!* Soon he is no longer sure just which of the seeming myriad loose ends of work he should pick up. They all seem important and ought to be done. What he needs is a change so that he may get away from his work in order to see it, and all else, more objectively. With the psychological lift that usually accompanies such change, concerns that previously sapped his vitality will seem trifling and tasks which were mountainous will assume their rightful proportion.

When life seems burdensome most of the day we owe it to ourselves and our work to get away. When the apostles were particularly busy so that "they had no leisure so much as to eat," Jesus said to them: "Come away by yourselves to a wilderness area and rest awhile" (Mark 6:31). Some of us would have objected, and probably some of them did. When someone suggests a rest there is invariably some zealot who will pipe up: "The devil doesn't take a vacation and I'm not going to either!" Well, whose disciples are we anyway? Whom do we imitate and serve? When Jesus told his disciples that it was time for a change "they departed into the wilderness area by boat privately." Why do we not do the same? And as Jesus and his disciples sometimes refreshed themselves near the headwaters of a river, in their case the Jordan, why do we not go and do likewise? The rest will refresh us for our task which we will then see in its correct proportions. Our work is best seen in perspective when we are away from it for awhile. Too many who labor in the Lord's vineyard imagine that they cannot get away from their work. Some become obsessed with notions of their indispensability until illness shows them the error of their way. It would have been better for their work and for themselves if they had gone into the wilderness to rest for awhile. They would have recovered much needed perspective and come back refreshed in body and soul. Moreover, having been away from them, they would have a new appreciation for the conveniences of modern life, and appreciation is what gives life its richness.

IV

A last reflection which I shall mention as coming out of the experience of canoeing is *the blessing of fellowship.* God has made us social creatures who should love and enjoy each other. Why then the friction, the hatred, and the sheer rancor that there is in the world today? The answer is obvious to those who know the Word. The catechism does not overstate the matter when it declares that men

are "prone by nature to hate God and (their) neighbor."[5] That statement which, when I had to learn it as a youth, looked ridiculous to me, I now believe to be profoundly true. The blessings of true fellowship are an unknown quantity to many persons. Their conception of society reminds one of Schopenhauer's comparison of human fellowship to a group of porcupines on a cold night. The chill night air made them want to huddle together for warmth, but when they came too close together they pricked each other with their quills. So they drew apart again only to suffer from the cold. After a series of adjustments they hunched shivering at that point where they suffered the least from the cold and from the pricks which they gave each other.

That cynical picture of human society has foundadation in the teaching of the catechism and of Scripture. "By nature" man is lost in sin; by grace which is in Jesus Christ he can be made a new creature who loves God and his neighbor. Christian fellowship is then possible and nowhere can one enjoy fellowship more satisfyingly than on a well-planned outing lasting at least a few days. In the common experiences of sharing camp duties, of sitting around the fire and occasionally pulling each other out of the water there comes intimate fellowship when soul communes with soul. A canoeist friend who recently wrote urging promotion of this form of recreation was thinking of such fellowship when he said, "The talks could be worth many sermons!" Nowhere can one speak about the deep issues of life as effectively as on a wilderness outing after a few days. After a day's journey with its varied experiences and the going down of the sun the chill night air draws one to the fire whose warmth penetrates the inner man. The spirit of *Gemuetlichkeit* engendered makes one grateful to be alive and receptive to the thoughts of others. Older boys and young men are particularly susceptible to good influences in such a setting. Discussion about the ultimate questions and camp devotions seem natural and sincere. Some who are hard to reach otherwise might be more responsive here.

Canoeing has become for me not only a means to see a piece of country, to enjoy camp life and the waters and wilds, but, as may have become evident, much else besides. It *can* become that for anybody — i.e., anybody who will not mind getting his feet wet and living *sans* faucet, footstool and lightswitch. So, come next summer, why not try *your* reflecting on theology from a canoe?

5. Question 5.

Some Recent Developments in Buddhist Studies

by Richard R. DeRidder

THE BUDDHISM FOUND IN CEYLON IS GENERALLY referred to as "Hinayana" Buddhism, but a more precise name for the Buddhism taught and practiced in this area of Asia would be "Theravadin." It is in a direct line of historical development from one of the eighteen schools into which the followers of the Buddha were divided not many years after his death. Theravadin Buddhism has been experiencing something of a revival, or resurgence, during the past few decades. Notable among the developments of this revival is the concern for an authoritative cannon for Buddhist doctrine.

Recently a scholar in Ceylon representing the Theravadin school made a comparison of the Christian and Buddhist scriptures. He stated that the Buddhists have no reliable tradition that goes back to the time of the Buddha. The Buddhist canons extant today were not written down until nearly five hundred years after the death of the Buddha. By that time the oral tradition that was passed on from monk to monk had gathered so much additional legendary material that it is impossible to tell what was the original doctrine of the Buddha. He stated that the strength of the Christian apologetic is, in his opinion, to be found in the formula, "Thus saith the Lord," and that we Christians may rejoice that we have a reliable and well-authenticated account of the life and words of Christ which goes back to the disciples of our Lord Himself. The Buddhist has no such account.

The Buddhists, then, are having problems with their scriptures. Not the least of these problems is which of their scriptures should be accepted as the authoritative canon. As a result they have begun a series of studies on their canons which can be profitable to the Christian apologetic and mission. The purpose of this article is to show what has been happening in Buddhist studies in Southeast Asia during the past few years, and to show the need for Christian scholars who will keep pace with these developments and assist the Christian missionary in his approach to the Buddhist world.

There is some urgency in this matter, for Buddhism has adopted many of the methods of the Chris-

tian West in its missionary activities. Buddhist mission societies have been formed, and missionaries have been sent to America, England, Germany, and to other countries of the Christian West. Not many years ago Buddhist commissions visited the Christian West to study the methods Christians employed in the religious education of Christian youth. Many of the things observed by these commissions are now being put into practice. Buddhist Sunday schools are flourishing in Ceylon, and the Sunday-school papers and lesson aids rival any that the Christian Church has provided.

Like Christianity, Buddhism has on occasion been exploited by strong-minded nationalists. Such nationalists insist that the only true citizen of Ceylon is the person who has not denied the ancient culture of his land, that is, the person who is a Buddhist. In other instances, as in India, Buddhism has been a tool in the hands of the leaders of the depressed classes and has appeared as the champion of their rights.

THE PERIODS OF BUDDHIST studies by the Christian West are easily traced. Up to about 1915 men such as T. W. Rhys Davids and H. Oldenburg were the authorities on Buddhism for the West. They represented what has come to be known as the "Older Anglo-German School." Their research was based on the study of the Pali canon of the Buddhist scriptures. These men held that the Pali canon preserved the original Buddhist doctrines more faithfully than other canonical books. Today there is no scholar of repute in Christian or Buddhist circles in South Asia who agrees with this thesis and accepts this evaluation of the Pali canon. The positions of this school have been abandoned as untenable, even though the school contributed much to the study of Buddhism.

The second school of Buddhist studies can be called the "Leningrad School." This school was headed by Stcherbatsky, Rosenburg, and Obermiller. These men studied the scholastic literature of Buddhism, which they believed to be nearer the original doctrine than the arbitrary reconstructions of the Older Anglo-German school. One of the great contributions of the Leningrad school was that it worked out the exact meaning of many technical Buddhist terms. Previously, the Older Anglo-German school had translated these terms on the basis of etymology or of common sense. Neither basis is reliable. Much of the confusion caused by the Older Anglo-German school still exists in the use of such terms as the "Buddhist Church," "Buddhist priests," "salvation," etc. These were merely Christian terms used to define quite different concepts in the Buddhist mind. The Leningrad school sought to correct this error. Its method was the study of the continuous living tradition of Tibet, Mongolia, China, and Japan. It believed that the mentality of Asiatic Buddhists was probably closer to that of the Buddha than the mentality of Western European Christians bursting with imperialist conceit. If the Older Anglo-German school made the Buddha appear as a moralist, this school held that a philosophical analysis of Buddhist teachings would reveal the real Buddhism, at least as closely as it can be reconstructed at this late date. Unfortunately, this school came to an end with the death of its exponents in 1935 and nothing further has been heard from scholars in the Soviet Union.

A third school followed. It has been called the "Franco-Belgian." This school has been shaped by men like Regamey, Lamotte, Levi, and others. Their approach has been described as follows: "These scholars continue on the line of the Russian school. They do not, however, slavishly follow Buddhist scholasticism, but use all the sources which are today available, supplementing their philogical and philosophical analysis with the data of ethnology, sociology, etc. They have abandoned as fruitless the attempt to reconstruct a pure Buddhism, are convinced that Buddhism is as much the work of the Buddhists as of the Buddha himself, and find the entire wealth and the true face of this religion in the manifoldness of its aspects, and the multiplicity of its sects or schools."

The principles of this school have been almost universally adopted by all scholars working in the field, in whatever country they live. This is the basic change which has taken place in Buddhist studies in the past twenty years.

OUR CONCERN IS with the period from the time of Buddha roughly to the time of Christ, when the Buddhist scriptures were reduced to writing. The status of the Pali canon is the real problem in this period, and the evaluation of this canon has certainly changed in recent years. It is now universally conceded that the Buddha did not speak Pali (a dialect of the West of India), but some kind of Magadhi. All his sayings are lost in their original form.

The Pali canon dominated Western studies of Buddhism for several reasons. Perhaps its prestige among Europeans owed something to the fact that it fitted in with the mood of the West better than other Buddhist writings. The Pali canon is clearly more "moralistic," and much less given than some others to religious devotion, mythology, and magic. The Pali canon stresses the ethical side of Buddhism, to which Protestants would readily respond.

There were originally eighteen schools in the first period of Buddhist history, and each of these schools of Buddhism had its own canon. Each of them could equally well claim to represent the teachings of the Buddha. That the Theravadin canon reached us in history more or less intact is not, say the Buddhist scholars, because of any intrinsic value

n this canon above others, but merely because of ccidents of history. The Muslims in their fanatical fury destroyed almost all the Buddhist records f the North of India. This prevented many of hese writings from ever reaching the seclusion f an island like Ceylon. In the relative seclusion nd freedom of Ceylon the Theravadin school could lourish. Only fragments of the writings of the Northern Buddhist schools are preserved in Sanskrit manuscripts in Nepal and Tibet. Because of the nterest of British scholars in the canon so easily accessible to them in the Pali language, the Pali canon came to have far greater significance and importance than was warranted by the facts of history.

In the past few years the writings of at least two other Buddhist schools from the ancient period have been made accessible to the Christian West: the Sarvastividians and the Mahasanghikas. Much of the material of these canons goes back to a common basis roughly two hundred and fifty years earlier than the previous Pali canon.

These recent studies have taught Buddhist and Christian alike that it is not a simple matter to reconstruct the original teaching. We cannot now get much earlier than three hundred years after the time of the Buddha, and it is evident that already by that time the Buddhists were quite in the habit of keeping their canon "up-to-date" with the addition of any material necessary to prove their point. Many attempts are being made through the means of comparative studies, linguistics, and the like, to get as far back to the Buddha as possible. This, however, has so far been fruitless. One of the foremost scholars among the Buddhists of Ceylon recently stated, "No sane man can, in fact, say anything conclusive about the doctrine of the Buddha himself. Even that of the ancient community is difficult to ascertain." He further admits that from our present point in history it is impossible to separate legend from fact in the personal history of the Buddha. It is impossible to state whether Buddhism began as a simple religion which developed in time into an increasingly elaborate and subtle theology and scholastic philosophy, or whether Buddhism was originally the philosophical doctrine of an elite group which was gradually vulgarized to suit the masses. This is a great admission from a Buddhist scholar!

MODERN BUDDHISM IS AGGRESSIVE. IT IS DETERMINED once again to gain its former prestige, and its followers openly declare that it has the spiritual power to remake the world. They are determined that it shall. Unfortunately, Christian studies of Buddhism have not kept pace with development in Buddhist theology. Christian mission theology and the orientation of Christian missionaries for service in Buddhist lands are still bound to the conclusions and the hypotheses of out-dated schools of Buddhist research. The Christian Church cannot be content to await the results of Buddhist scholars, but ought to participate in their research and theological developments. In this way it will not only be able to know its antagonist and determined supplanter, but be prepared to speak the truth to those who know only darkness.

"I Wrote the Missionary Gospel"*

by John Calvin Reid

Matthew

UBTLESS, during your lifetime you have participated many inspiring church services. But perhaps you can ember one that moved you more deeply than all ers. As a result of the message you heard, or the mmunion you received, or the anthem to which you ened, or the heroic example of some other Christian ut whom you were told, you felt a burning desire to omething out of the ordinary yourself for the cause Christ. "Here am I, send me," your soul kept saying, rou prayerfully sought some noble task to which you ht devote your whole heart and thereby prove yourself to be forever a profitable, as well as a faithful, servant of Him who gave His life for you.

Such were the stirrings in my heart as a result of an unforgettable church service in Antioch, Syria, on a certain glorious Lord's Day more than 1900 years ago. Unfortunately, the New Testament record of the service to which I refer is very brief:

> While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off."—Acts 13:2-4

But these few quiet words do not begin to point up the significance of that momentous occasion. I, being present that morning, remember as though it were yesterday, the solemn hush that fell upon the people, as

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s piece is taken from the recent book entitled *We Wrote the pels* by John Calvin Reid, copyrighted and published by the . B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1960. $2.00.

Paul and Barnabas knelt at the front of the church and the elders came forward to lay their hands upon them. I can still hear the earnest words of prayer that were offered by several members of the congregation. I can still see the moist eyes of Paul and Barnabas as we shook hands with them at the close of the service and wished them Godspeed. I was one of those who waved a prayerful farewell to them the next day as their ship slipped out of the near-by harbor at Seleucia. We did not know it at the time, but as that ship disappeared on the western horizon, the "Good News" about Jesus Christ was on its way to Corinth and Athens and Rome and Great Britain and America!

Thus began the World Mission Enterprise of the Christian Church. We, the members of the church in Antioch, were the ones who launched it.

So what a privilege and joy it was to be a member of that church. You will remember that in the Book of Acts it is said that it was in Antioch that the disciples were first called "Christians." It was a name given us in derision. Just as the enemies of Jesus mocked Him on the cross, but uttered a profound truth when they said, "He saved others, himself he cannot save," so with a sneer they called us "Christians." They meant it to be a crown of thorns, but by sending Paul and Barnabas forth to preach the Gospel, and by continuing to be the home base of the missionary enterprise, we turned it into a crown of glory! God had only one Son — and He was a missionary! We had caught His spirit, and were continuing His program.

The pride I felt in being a member of that missionary-minded church at Antioch stirred me with a fervent desire to do something personally to undergird, support, and promote the cause of evangelism. I was not gifted in speaking, as were Paul and Barnabas, so I felt inadequate to go as a missionary myself. But I did possess some ability as a writer, and in time arrived at the conviction that this was the talent God had given me to use in His Kingdom's service.

For, you see, as Paul and Barnabas and other missionaries from time to time came back to the church at Antioch to report their experiences, it became increasingly clear that some written, orderly record of the life of Jesus and His teachings was needed to encourage and support them in their efforts and to provide a source of material for the instruction of new converts.

To this task I proceeded to address myself first by collecting materials. In my search, I inquired of those who had known Jesus when He was in the flesh, I listened to sermons by various ministers and missionaries, some of whom quoted, as well as interpreted, His words. And I collected short written records already in circulation — all this in preparation for the longer and more complete work I had in mind.

In due time it was my good fortune to secure a copy of a book written in Rome by a devoted member of the church there, composed during, or shortly after, the terrible persecutions of the Christians under the Emperor Nero. This book is also in your New Testament and known to you as "the Gospel According to Ma It proved to be of more help to me than all the o records I had been able to assemble.

For the purpose the author had in mind, that ea Gospel was a very wonderful book. That purpose to sustain and encourage the Christians in Rome in t dark hours of trial. This, John Mark did by portra Jesus as "the Strong Son of God" — mighty in d courageous in action. Mark, I found, had a great to say about the *works* of Jesus, but little about *teachings.*

In my book, I sought to supply this lack. B did not reject what he had written. As a matter of I used in one form or another almost all of his mat — in some cases, of course, I condensed his stories, my main revision was in the form of addition, the sertion and interweaving of new material. I added extended discourses by Jesus, quite a number of parables, and many noteworthy short sayings that M did not record.

The best known and most important of these longer discourses has become known as "the Ser on the Mount."

It begins, as you will recall: "Blessed are the in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven," closes with a striking parable by Jesus about two one of whom built his house upon the rock, the o upon the sand.

This great sermon of Jesus I published as a g to Christian ethics and morality. It served the s purpose in the early days of the Church that the Commandments did in the time of Moses and therea

You see, during the first century, when eager verts came flocking in great numbers into the chur as a result of the evangelistic activity of the miss aries, in all too many cases their response was emotional upsurge of enthusiasm, producing no fu mental change in character. "Believe on the Lord J Christ and thou shalt be saved" was a very si formula for salvation — sometimes too simple to tr form the lives of those who offered themselves baptism.

The result was — and I am afraid this may sti true of your generation — that faith was often divo from life and church membership related only rem to conduct.

Quite early, therefore, the leaders of the Ch began to see the vital connection between evangelism education, and the absolute necessity for instructio be given to the new converts. Capable teachers urgently needed, but also a satisfactory textbook was I who supplied this second need. My book m aptly be called, "The First Faith and Life Curric for the Christian Church."

In it I have preserved and quoted many of the important and challenging sayings of Jesus, such "Ye are the light of the world . . . . Ye are the salt o earth . . . . Swear not at all . . . . Love your enemies Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven . . . . Be

ous . . . . Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his eousness . . . . Judge not that ye be not judged . . . . ow is the way that leadeth unto life . . . . By their s ye shall know them . . . . He that would be greatest ng you, let him be servant of all . . . . Forgive even seventy times seven."

The first converts in Syria and Asia Minor needed ls such as these — of course they did — but I wonder ney were needed then more than your church in rica needs them today? I am told that one of your -known magazines has sponsored a nation-wide sur- designed to assess the intensity of religious faith in United States, and the degree to which it governs thics and behavior of the American people. Results ne survey revealed that 95% of the American people vered "Yes" to the question, "Do you believe in ?"; 90% claimed that they pray; 76% described nselves as church members; 91% declared that they honestly trying to lead a good life; 80% think that t of America's problems would be solved by absolute erence to the law of love; and 80% think that they nselves obey the law of love.

But, as the article in which these figures are quoted s on to point out, "These figures are dramatically mpatible with the facts of American behavior, as ealed on every level of national existence today. The ndard, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself' is iously not even approximated, for example, in busi- s competition, where each man necessarily places own interests above all others, no matter how scrupu- ly he may adhere to the relative demands of honesty fair play. And it is openly repudiated in such other ects of American life as capital and labor strife, anti- nitism, and the inequality and discrimination to ch racial minorities like the Negroes, Mexicans and ei are subjected."

If the conclusions of this article are true, it would n that the basic religious problem in your generation, t was in mine, is not to get people to profess Chris- ity, but to get them to live it. And this brings us face ace with the words with which Jesus closed His great mon on the Mount: "Every one then who hears these ngs of mine and does them will be like a wise n who built his house upon the rock."

You see, away back there in the first century, I ized that the evangelistic mission of the church was med to failure unless followed by, and combined with, rogram of Christian education. That is why in my pel I stressed the teaching ministry of Jesus and ted Him as making such strong statements as: "Not ry one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of Father which is in heaven."

But the Early Church needed more than a "Faith and e Curriculum" to instruct its members as to the ical and moral significance of commitment to Christ. eeded also what might be called "A Foreign Mission nual" to guide and encourage the missionaries they went from city to city proclaiming the good news of salvation in Christ. Many were their discouragements and problems! One of the first and most difficult problems encountered was the one created by the opposition and hostility of the leaders of Judaism. So persistent was this hostility and so bitter the persecution of Christians which resulted that I soon arrived at the conclusion, as did the Apostle Paul, that it was worse than a waste of time to continue to try to take the gospel to the Jews — particularly since the Gentiles were responding with such warmth to the gospel message.

In my Gospel, therefore, I reminded my readers again and again of the way in which the Jewish leaders had opposed and persecuted Jesus. Also, I recalled for them how Jesus over and again had denounced them for their stupidity. "Blind leaders of the blind," He called them.

But basically Jesus was infinitely tender and patient toward His own people. Their rejection of Him all but broke His heart, as I reminded my readers when I quoted His deeply moving words, spoken during His last week in the holy city: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, killing the prophets and stoning those who are sent to you! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not!"

In contrast to the hostility of the Jewish leaders was the warm understanding Jesus received from such men as the Roman centurion whose interview with Jesus I recorded in chapter 8 of my book and whose warm understanding caused Jesus to say: "Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

These words of Jesus, and others like them, preserved in my book, helped to lead the missionary-minded men of the first century to the conviction that undertaking to convert the Jewish people was both a thankless and a hopeless task. It was time to cast the net on the other side of the boat! Thus my Gospel, more than any other book in the New Testament, supported Paul and other broad-minded leaders and influenced the Church to turn from the Jews and to concentrate upon the Gentiles as the primary field of missionary endeavor. Had this viewpoint not been advanced, and had it not prevailed, you yourselves possibly would never have heard the good news about Jesus Christ!

But beyond that, and even more important than that, I fired the missionary enthusiasm of the early Christians by reminding them of Jesus' personal enthusiasm and by quoting His own words with regard to the world mission of the Church.

I reminded them, for example, of the day He looked out upon the multitudes, and was moved with compassion, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad as sheep having no shepherd. Thus moved He said to

His disciples: "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest."

To brace the early missionaries for the bitter persecutions they were encountering, I reminded them of the saying of Jesus, "Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves; so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. Beware of men; for they will deliver you up to councils, and flog you in their synagogues, and you will be dragged before governors and kings for my sake, to bear testimony before them and the Gentiles . . . . and you will be hated by all for my name's sake . . . . But he who endures to the end will be saved."

The climax of my book, of course, is the last paragraph in which I quote the last earthly words of Jesus, known as "the Great Commission": "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age."

To be perfectly frank with you, not every member of our church at Antioch believed in world missions. Even on that momentous day, which I have already described, when Paul and Barnabas were ordained and sent forth, there were some who murmured: "We need them here. There are thousands of people in this very city of Antioch who are not yet Christians. Why waste men and money on the heathen abroad until we have converted the heathen at home?"

Quite early I learned that it was all but useless to argue with such people, but there was one effective thing that I could do and did do, namely, to tell them in and through my book what Jesus Himself thought and said and did about missions. World evangelism is not a man-originated idea; it was born in the mind and heart of Christ. It was He who said: "Go, preach, teach, make disciples of all nations!" And He was speaking in the imperative mode — the mode of command. He was speaking as a commander-in-chief might issue marching orders to his soldiers. As I saw it, and as I r emphatic in my book, there is a basic contradictio the life of any follower of Christ who says, "I belie the *person* of Christ, but I do not believe in His *prog* I will worship Him and pray to Him, but as to commands, I will obey only those I choose to obey.

"Mutiny in the midst of bounty" is the only nam such an attitude. That is the way I saw it when I w that is the way I see it still. To put it again in words: "Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and do what I tell you?"

But most persuasively of all, I reminded my readers, as I would remind you, that to His last mand Jesus attached a wonderful promise: "And am with you always, to the close of the age."

From one point of view the promise is unlimite a literal translation from the Greek is: "All the d — through days of confident faith, and days of sad b dering; through days when the birth of a child br joy, and days when the death of a child brings sor through days of peace and days of war; through when life is music, and days when despair w you in a cloud of gloom. The promise includes them "Lo, I am with you all the days!"

But from another point of view there is a def limit to the promise. Jesus did not say, "I am wit who believe in Me, with all who worship Me, wit who pray to Me, with all who are members of Church" but, rather, "Go . . . make disciples of all na . . . and lo, I am with *you* all the days!" It is onl those who hear and obey this His last urgent comm that the promise applies. He does not promise to be you along every path you may choose to walk, but a this one path — the path of witness, the path of win the world to Him, the path of quiet testimony whe you bring others into His Kingdom.

You must not miss the point of that, my friend you are a witnessing Christian, if you are using money, your words, your life, your example, accor to the abilities and opportunities which He has g you; if you are walking the path of dutiful, gra response to this His Great Commission, "Go . . . make ciples" — then the promise is yours, e word of it, the highest meaning of it, every day of every year, all the way to end!

But if not . . . . But let there be n not" in your heart! Rather, let the mes of the last words of my Gospel, which also the last words of your Lord, stir soul to the very depths until you say, no reserve and no delay: "Here am I, I send me!"

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O'er mountain or plain or sea;
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BOOK REVIEW

HE PASCHAL LITURGY AND THE POCALYPSE by Massey H. Shepherd, . (Richmond, Virginia: John Knox ress, 1960). 99 pp. $1.50.

eviewed by James O. Handley, Jr.

This remarkable monograph is the xth in an invaluable series called Ecu- enical Studies in Worship. The pre- ding titles include *Essays on the ord's Supper* by Oscar Cullmann and . J. Leenhardt and *Worship in Ancient srael* by A. S. Herbert.

The author of *The Paschal Liturgy*, r. Shepherd, is Professor of Liturgics t the Church Divinity School of the acific, Berkeley, California. In this onograph, as in all his other books, e shows himself a master in the study f worship and its related disciplines — atristics, church history, exegesis, and istorical theology. Anyone who sub- its to his instruction will go away very ich.

By "Paschal Liturgy" the author re- ers to the corporate worship of the arly church involved in the Pascha, hich scholars have rediscovered as the arliest and most basic of the Christian estivals, unless one includes the Lord's ay as a festival. (See "Toward a Re- ormed Lent," *Reformed Journal*, April, 960). To the reviewer it appears that r. Shepherd is concerned to lay out he various parts of the Paschal Liturgy nd to demonstrate the Apostolic ori- in of it. Of course, throughout the onograph there is set forth the pri- ary nature of the Festival as a unitive celebration of our Lord's redemptive acts, particularly His death, resurrection, ascension, and sending of the Spirit. The reader will realize as never before how much poorer the Christian Church has made herself by loosing the eschatological emphasis of our Lord's works through breaking up the celebration of them into isolated historical commemorations — Good Friday, Easter, Ascension Day, and Pentecost.

By drawing on the New Testament, the utterly reliable *Apostolic Tradition* of Hippolytus, and the writings of such early theologians as Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Origen, and Irenaeus, Dr. Shepherd provides the reader with the parts, order and details of the Liturgy. The five parts in their proper order were the Friday-Saturday fast, the Saturday night vigil, the baptism of catechumens, their anointing with oil, and the Eucharist early "Easter" Sunday morning.

Perhaps the most fascinating part of this study is the second. There Dr. Shepherd demonstrates the relation between the *Revelation* of John and the Paschal Liturgy. "We propose to show that the outline or plan according to which the visions unfold is possibly — we would say, probably — laid out in a scheme that follows the order of the Church's Paschal liturgy" (p. 77); for example, he shows that the seven letters to the churches in Revelation 1-3 correspond as a section with the final scrutinies of the catechumens at the beginning of the Pascha; again, the sealing of the white-robed martyrs in chapter 7 corresponds to the Paschal initiation of the catechumens; again, the marriage supper of the Lamb in chapter 19 corresponds to the Eucharist as the climax of the Pascha. However, Dr. Shepherd is quite explicit that the Apocalypse is neither a liturgy nor lectionary nor a liturgical homily: "Without question the book is a work of prophecy" (p. 77). Needless to say, the preacher will find in this section on the *Revelation* an abundance of suggestive material for some absorbing sermons for Lent and/or the Great Fifty Days from Easter to Pentecost.

The reader will be quite convinced also that the Paschal Liturgy is Apostolic germinally, and that it is faithful to the Apostolic revelation in its development into the form found in Hippolytus by 215 A.D. One is surprised at the evidence which Dr. Shepherd skillfully uncovers in Acts, 1 Corinthians, and the Gospels, especially Mark; for example, the time sequences in the Markan passion narratives suggest that by the time the Evangelist wrote, there was already a full liturgical celebration of the Pascha at Rome.

A reader standing in the American Reformed tradition may wonder why it is that the liturgy of the early church is virtually ignored today in Reformed churches.

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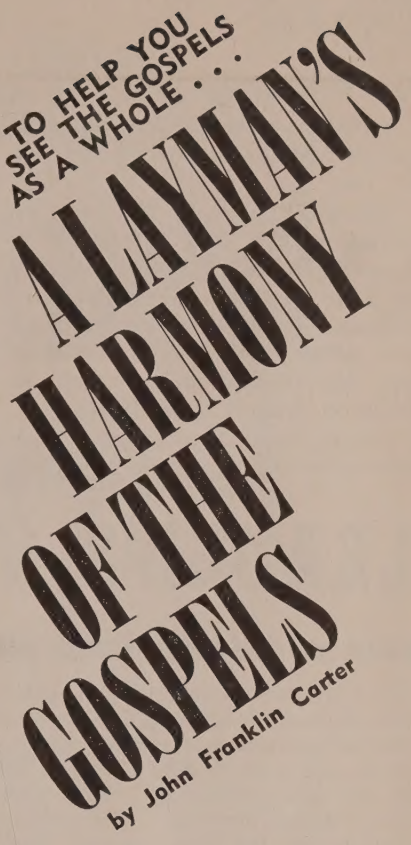

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LETTERS

DEAR EDITORS:

We thank you for the best wishes and prayers for your readers for the coming year.

Theodore Cuyler in his book *Recollections of a Long Life* writes in essence the following: "Charles Dickens, the giant English writer, wrote many volumes, but he never soiled its pages with criticizing the Holy Scriptures." May this be also the case with the *Reformed Journal* in the future.

Turning to another subject, I note that in the January issue Rev. Van Baalen has an article on the six creation days. After quoting at length an article in the *Saturday Evening Post* about the "Riddle of the Frozen Giants," Rev. Van Baalen writes: "The only alternative seems to be that these tens of thousands of animals of all descriptions existed over a vast area of the world and were destroyed before man appeared on the scene."

Then the article goes on to say, "If any one wants to explain all this in the 'framework' of a six times twenty-four hour creation, we'd like to hear of it."

So here is an opportunity to write a few lines. We will be brief for the sake of space, and, also, with Brunner Tillich, Niebuhr, Bultmann and Barth in our midst we will not spend too much time defending the Holy Scriptures amongst ourselves.

Explain the creation week? No Scripture is God's Word and we have no comprehensive knowledge; God alone has this. There are hundreds of points, maybe thousands, which are far harder to explain but which we believe. Science admits today, "We have no comprehensive knowledge of anything in creation."

Is the article of Rev. Van Baalen not mixing up Genesis 1 and 2? Are the first verses of Genesis 2 not a brief review? Does not Peter in his Epistle tell us that with the flood the earth was (the whole earth) covered with water? Oh, the change that took place then.

Shall we not consider that God created it all by the Word of his power? Our wise God, who created time, made an amazing cycle — 24 hours, 6 days, then a day of rest. No atheist today would like to change it if he could.

Let us now sit down and read again Genesis 1. What a symphony! "It was morning and evening," etc. Shall we not also believe that our heavenly Father 3,000 years later wrote on tables of stone, "In six days God made heaven and earth"?

We also believe that God leads the church in the truth. The Westminster Confession, which is as pure as our creeds, states: "In six days God made heaven and earth."

We trust that no teacher in our schools will ever teach otherwise.

D. KORT

Oaklawn, Illinois

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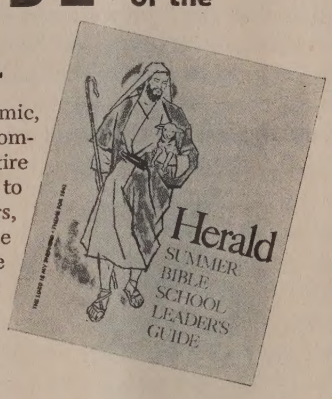

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